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SUBJECT: ROMANIA'S EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION RESULTS

¶1. (U) The Central Electoral Bureau (BEC) on June 8 announced the results of the European Parliamentary (EP) elections held in Romania on Sunday, June 7. The PSD and PC coalition led the PDL by just over a percentage point (30.07-29.71). PNL came in at 14.52, PRM 8.65 and independent (and President Basescu's modeling daughter) Elena Basescu at 4.22 percent. The ethnic Hungarian party UDMR garnered 8.92 percent. Various exit polls, including INSOMAR, came in with similar figures that were within the margin of error. It appears that right-wing xenophobic politicians Vadim Tudor and Gigi Becali will succeed in their respective bids to join the European Parliament (as will Elena Basescu, who as an independent under current rules would lose her spot if she decides to rejoin her father's party, the PDL). Prominent and respected politicians like former PSD Foreign Minister Adrian Severin, PDL leaders Theodor Stolojan, Monica Macovei, Traian Ungureanu and Cristian Preda were successful in their bids, as were PNL's Norica Nicolai and Renate Weber. UDMR's Laszlo Tokes and Iuliu Winkler also made the list.

¶2. (SBU) There was palpable voter apathy for these EP elections. Preliminary estimates put voter turnout at around 27.4% (about 4.6 million voters). The fact that the elections were held on the Sunday before "Rusalli" (Pentecost) Monday, when many Romanians take advantage of the three-day weekend to get out of town, assured a lower voter turnout, adding to the political fatigue that has affected Romanians across the board. The apathy was more pronounced in urban than in rural areas in general. There are some indications that the rural voter turnout actually increased slightly over the 2007 EP elections, which probably accounts for PSD's stronger showing over the PDL. One exception was that support for Elena Basescu was apparently more heavily urban than rural. One observer from the newspaper "Romania Libera" described the election as the lowest voter turnout since the fall of communism.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: There is some surprise at Becali's and Vadim Tudor's success in the results. Most people do not take either of these iconoclastic personalities seriously. Some saw Elena Basescu's electoral run as a field test of the popularity of the Basescu name. With the EP elections out of the way, the field is now cleared for the fall presidential race to take center stage in earnest. Mission will report in greater depth on lessons learned from the EP elections septel. End comment.
GUTHRIE-CORN